

**PE1797/B**

Dr Lizzie Rowe submission of 21 August 2020

The gassing or maceration of male chicks soon after they have struggled out of the shell is ethically offensive not only to consumers but also to those who work in the industry. No one wants to kill day-old chicks. However, due to the monopolisation of the market by supermarkets and the price pressures they impose on producers, and because laying hens have been heavily selected for egg production, it is not economically viable to rear male layers for meat production. This reduces sentient animals to unprofitable by-products. The wasted energy used to incubate chicks that are immediately destroyed is also a concern from a sustainability perspective. Dual-purpose breeds, which have been bred to offer better meat production than commercial layers and therefore the males can be raised for meat production, cannot compete economically in the market because the females produce fewer eggs than commercial layers, and the males produce less meat than commercial broiler breeds. Sexing eggs 'in ovo' (inside the egg) offers an ethical solution to this problem, because sexing occurs before brain development and therefore before the foetus is receptive to pain. It is also better from a sustainability perspective, because energy is not wasted incubating male eggs, and the male eggs can be recycled into nutritious animal feed. In ovo sexing is commercially viable, as shown by the success of the brand 'Respeggt' in Germany, France and the Netherlands (<https://respeggt.com/en/the-products/>). This has shown that even if eggs free from chick culling cost more, consumers are willing to pay this extra price for the avoidance of cruelty. It is possible to work with producers to create a commercially viable system that benefits producers, consumers, and of course, chicks.

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